# A TREATISE ON ENGLISH SHOOTING;

UNDER THE FOLLOWING HEADS:

Of the Knowledge of a good Fowling-Piece.
The ordering and managing the Fowling-Piece.
The Appendages of the Fowling-Piece.
The Choice of Powder, Shot, and Flints.
Of Partridge Shooting, with the choice and ordering of Pointers.
Of Pheaſant Shooting, with the ordering of Spaniels.
Of Woodcock Shooting.
Of Snipe Shooting.
Of Water and Fen-Fowl Shooting; and the Uſe of proper Dogs.
Of Upland Winter Shooting.

WITH

NECESSARY OBSERVATIONS

FOR THE

YOUNG SPORTSMAN

WHEN OUT AND ON RETURNING HOME.

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By GEORGE EDIE, Gent.

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*THE following Treatiſe on Shooting (in which I have been as conciſe under the different heads as the nature of the ſubject would admit of) muſt at leaſt be found uſeful to the Young Sportſman. A complete Work of this kind, I am ſenſible has been long wanted; but whether the brief contents of theſe pages have, in any degree, a merit to ſuch a title, I leave to the determination of my brother ſportſmen in general.*

# A TREATISE ON ENGLISH SHOOTING.

## *Of the Knowledge of a good Fowling-Piece.*

OUR Engliſh Fowling-Piece has, of late years, met with ſo much improvement, that we may, without partiality, eſteem it equal, if not ſuperior, to any other in Europe. Notwithſtanding, it muſt be confeſſed, we have many more bad than good pieces among us; wherefore it will be very neceſſary to lay down a few hints for the uſe of the young ſportſman; that he may not ignorantly purchaſe a Piece worth little or nothing, when he is, perhaps, deſirous of having one of the beſt ſort. As to the apparent good properties of one of our modern Pieces, they may be reckoned thus: the barrel

of

of a tolerable large bore, and very ſmooth, with a handſome outſide, and the length from three foot to three foot ſix inches; the lock rather ſmall, with good and ſtrong ſprings; the ſtock neat, not too much bent in the butt; and, upon the whole, the Piece to riſe light and handy to the ſhoulder; the mounting may be according to fancy; however, the braſs, as being leſs liable to be damaged by wet, and no trouble to keep clean, is certainly preferable to the ſteel. The internal goodneſs of a Piece can only be known by trial, without which no new one ſhould be purchaſed. For the purpoſe of trying a gun, the following hints may ſuffice: tack up a large ſheet of brown paper, with a card in the middle, on a clear barn-door, or ſome ſuch place, that the degree of ſcattering may be the better obſerved; ſtand at about the diſtance of ſeventy yards, and try at firſt the common charge of a pipe of powder, and a pipe and half of ſhot; and to do the gun juſtice, be as ſteady as poſſible in your aim: if you find you have thrown any at this diſtance into the card, you may ſafely conclude the Piece is a good one; or if you have miſſed the card, perhaps through unſteadineſs, and thrown a tolerable ſprinkling into the ſheet, you may have the ſame good opinion of the gun; but if you find none in the ſheet, and are ſenſible of having ſhot ſteady, try then an equal quantity of powder and ſhot (which ſome barrels are found to carry beſt) at the ſame diſtance; and if you then miſs giving the ſheet a tolerable ſprinkling, refuſe the Piece, as being but an in-

indifferent one, if you are determined to have one of the beſt ſort, which certainly is moſt adviſable: and this trial may be reckoned altogether ſufficient for a gun that is recommended by any gunſmith as a firſt-rate one. But for the ſecond, or more indifferent ſort, let fifty-five or ſixty yards be the diſtance of trial, and a judgment formed according to the above rule: but it muſt be obſerved, that as ſome Pieces carry a larger quantity of powder and ſhot than others, ſo it will be adviſable to try three or four different quantities; but never to exceed a pipe and a half of powder, and the proportionable quantity of ſhot, as abovementioned.

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## *The ordering and managing a Gun.*

WHEN a perſon is maſter of a good Piece, the keeping it in proper order is a main article to the doing execution with it: it is neceſſary the inſide of the barrel, the touch-hole, and the lock, be kept clean; and the ſprings and moving parts of the lock properly oiled. The barrel ſhould be waſhed at leaſt after every eighteen or twenty fires, where the beſt ſort of powder is uſed; but if the gunpowder is an inferior ſort, then the barrel will require the oftener waſhing. The beſt method of waſhing a barrel is, by taking out the britch-pin; but as this can ſeldom be conveniently done,

done, take the barrel out of the ſtock, and put the britch-end into a pail of warm water, leaving the touch-hole open; then, with an iron rod, with tow or a bit of linen rag at the end, draw up and down in the ſyringe manner, till it is quite clean; changing the water, and rinſing the inſide, as the foulneſs requires: when the barrel is perfectly clean, its inſide muſt be dried by tow, or linen rags; and when this is done, it will be proper to put in a red-hot iron, of ſix or eight inches in length (which any blackſmith will furniſh), and move it up and down to dry any remaining damp: the outſide of the barrel ſhould be well dried, and a little oil rubbed over every time of cleaning.

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## *The Appendages of the Gun.*

THE neceſſary appendages to the Fowling-Piece are, an iron-rod, with a ſcrew or worm at one end, and a ſcrape (to clear ruſt or caked powder) at the other, which rod is to be uſed for the waſhing and dry-cleaning the inſide of the barrel, and a turn-ſcrew ſhould be kept for the uſe of the lock. A flaſk, or horn, for the carriage of the powder, the ſize and ſhape of which may be according to fancy; however, it will be proper to have the meaſure of the charge to hold the exact quantity the gun is found

found to carry. A leather pouch, or ſmall canvas bag, to carry the ſhot; with a tin, or other meaſure, that will hold the exact charge of the gun: this article of the exact meaſure for the powder and ſhot ſhould be particularly obſerved; as it not only ſaves trouble, but is charging with more certainty and exactneſs.

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## *The Choice of Powder, Shot, and Flints.*

THE beſt ſort of Powder is ſmall-grained, hard to crumble between the finger and thumb, and of a bluiſh caſt; which ſhould be the only ſort uſed, by rights, for the Fowling-piece. The ſhot ſhould be round and ſolid; and the more it has theſe properties, the better it is: the ſize muſt be according to the ſhooting that it is intended for; there is from No. 1 to 6, and ſmaller, which is called muſtard-ſeed, or duſt-ſhot; but the No. 5, is ſmall enough for any ſhooting whatſoever. The No. 1, may be uſed for wild-geeſe; the No. 2, for ducks, widgeons, and other water-fowl; the No. 3, for pheaſants, (partridges after the firſt month) and all the Fen-fowl; the No. 4 for partridges, woodcocks, &c. and the No. 5 for ſnipes, and all the ſmaller birds. As to the choice of flints, the clear ones are the beſt; but whether the dark or light ſort, is immaterial, as there are good of both kinds: the ſize ſhould be ſuited to the lock of the gun, and

be neither too large and thick, nor too ſmall and ſlight; the firſt will not give fire freely, and the other will be very apt to break.

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## *Of Partridge-Shooting.*

PArtridge-ſhooting begins, by Act of Parliament, on the firſt of September, and ends the twelfth of February; and which, on account of the cleanneſs, little fatigue, and more certain diverſion than any other, by their being found in coveys, and taking ſhort flights, is generally eſteemed the genteeleſt and beſt ſport we have in England. In the beginning of the ſeaſon, they haunt the wheat, barley, oat, peas and bean ſtubbles; but the wheat-vetch is their favourite: they alſo lie in turnips, clover-ſeed, on fallow-land; and indeed, at times, are found any where. The moſt proper dog, and what is generally uſed for Partridge-ſhooting, is the pointer, a dog extremely well calculated for the ſport; as Partridges can ſeldom or ever be ſeen on the ground, if the ſtubble, &c. be but three or four inches high: if the pointer be ſtaunch, and have a good noſe, he will ſeldom paſs in common fields within forty yards of a covey, without intimating by a point pretty near the exact line they lie in. A brace, or leaſh of dogs, are ſufficient, where the fields

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are not uncommonly large; if they are, two brace or more will be preferable. The ſmall light dogs are, for many reaſons, to be preferred to the large, heavy, Spaniſh breed; as they hunt the ground over quicker; quarter it better; and will go over two or three times as much as the heavy ſort, without being tired, or looſing the ſkin off their feet. When we come on the covey, and the dogs point and back one another well, which ſhould be carefully obſerved, reprimanding ſuch as are in fault; then we either put on the dog who firſt made the point, or walk the covey up; either way may be practiſed, but the laſt is rather preferable. Now appears the difference between the good and bad ſportſman; the greateſt coolneſs and compoſure are now neceſſary: when they riſe, lift your gun deliberately to your ſhoulder, ſingle out that bird which flies moſt ſeparate, from the reſt; and when you find your aim true and ſteady, and not before then, fire; obſerving carefully the way the reſt of the covey take, and mark, as nearly as you can, where they go down. As to rules for ſhooting flying, they are of little or no ſignification: a good gun, a cool and ſteady aim, and practice; for the nice difference in aiming at or before the mark, muſt all contribute to make a good flying markſman. The beſt of Partridge-ſhooting, in the ſportſman's eſteem, is, when the birds take to the hedges; (as we term it) which is running under the hedges in the time of rain, for ſhelter; where

they will lie for ſome time after the rain is over: when it is fair, and not before, take two or three ſpaniels; or, better, a brace of good hedge-pointers; and hunt the hedges near where you know the covey lies; two perſons ſhould go together in this ſport, one on each ſide the hedge; and the bird being reckoned his ſhot, on whoſe ſide of the hedge it flies out. The birds will ſoon ſeparate and afford excellent diverſion, by riſing ſingly and near you, giving time for the better aim. When pointers are uſed, the birds are frequently obliged to be beat out, by ſtriking the buſh where the point is made; and they will often lie and ſuffer themſelves to be taken by both ſpaniels and pointers, ſo ſtupid and lazy are they in and after rain. In this ſport, the birds ſhould be carefully marked, or it will be but very tireſome diverſion.

## *Of Pheaſant-Shooting.*

THIS ſport begins, by Act of Parliament, on the firſt of October, and laſts till the firſt of February. The Pheaſant's brood is called an eye, as the brood of the partridge is a covey. They are of late years become much more ſcarce than formerly; however, they are found in the woods of moſt of the counties of England, more or leſs: they afford very pretty ſhooting, tho'

tho' far more fatiguing and tireſome than partridge ſhooting; owing to the buſhes, briars, and other diſagreeable circumſtances of the woods. Spaniels are to be uſed in this ſport, and two, three or four brace, may be taken together into the wood: the number of perſons together ſhould not exceed three or four, and they ſhould go regularly up and down the wood, and ſpread at about thirty or forty yards diſtance: the dogs ſhould not be of the wild ſort, but keen-noſed, and apt to give their tongue, (i. e. bark or yelp) when they come on the ſcent. Keep as near the dogs as poſſible; and when they ſpring, one or more, let ſuch only fire at the bird, as to whom in point of riſing it belongs; which rule ſhould be always obſerved in all ſorts of ſhooting in company. As in Pheaſant-ſhooting, the trees frequently interfere, forbear firing till you have a clear aim at the bird; which, if it cannot be had, it is better to let him eſcape for another chance.

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## *Of Woodcock-Shooting.*

THE ſeaſon for Cock-ſhooting, generally begins towards the latter end of November: they are birds of paſſage, and come over to us in flights in the night time, about the full

full of the moon; the firſt flight, which is ſometimes in October, is commonly very ſcanty; but they continue coming over, more or leſs every moon, till February; conſequently, it will generally be found they are in greater plenty towards the latter end of the winter; though this is no abſolute rule, as they are very irregular, with regard to number, in their coming over; ſometimes the firſt or ſecond flight being the largeſt we have through the winter, and the others very trifling: they remain with us generally till the middle or latter end of March. Their haunts are chiefly in the ſprings and bogs, in woods and coppices; and in the beginning of the winter, before the leaves are well off, they prefer the out-parts of the woods. For ſpringing them, we uſe ſpaniels, and a leaſh, or two brace, of the ſteady, keen-noſed ſort, are ſufficient for two or three ſhooters; which are as many as ſhould go together in this ſport: and, as in pheaſant ſhooting, it is neceſſary to keep as near the dogs as poſſible, which ſhould always be obſerved where ſpaniels are uſed. A Woodcock is a very tender bird; and being a large mark, affords eaſy, pretty ſhooting, where a perſon has got the art of ſhooting flying tolerable well; but it frequently occurs that the bird riſes in a perpendicular line, which is the moſt difficult ſhot that is: in this caſe, an unexperienced ſportſman will find it more adviſable, to forbear firing (if opportunity will allow) till the bird has arrived at the height of the perpendicular, and flies offward; but

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as a ſhot will be often loſt by this delay, the good markſman ſhould never wait it, except he judges the ſhot will be better.

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## *Of Snipe-Shooting.*

THE Snipe, like the woodcock, is a bird of paſſage: they begin coming over to us about the middle or latter end of October, and remain with us pretty forward in the ſpring: they frequent, like the woodcock, the ſprings, bogs, and marſhy places; but with this difference, that the cock ſeeks theſe in cover, and the Snipe in the open clear parts, as fields and commons. Snipes afford as pretty ſport to a good markſman, as any bird whatſoever; though they are very quick fliers, yet are very tender, and will fall almoſt at the bare report of the gun. The ſeveral diſagreeable circumſtances met with in wood-ſhooting, are in this ſport avoided; and a perſon has here no other inconvenience, than a little wet and dirt, which may be eaſily guarded againſt by wearing boots. We ſpring Snipes either with ſpaniels, or by making a ſlight ſharp kind of noiſe, about the places where we know they haunt: they moſtly fly directly againſt the wind (if there is any material air ſtirring); and a ſhot after them, is the beſt

and

and moſt ſure: the ſlant and croſs ſhots are rather difficult, as they are a ſmall mark, and fly exceeding quick. For practice in this, which is very nice, ſwallow-ſhooting may be uſed in ſummer to advantage.

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## *Of Water-Fowl and Fen-Shooting.*

THE haunts of the Water-fowl, as Geeſe, Ducks, Widgeons, &c. are well known. In ſhooting them, we uſe the longeſt killing gun, and as large ſhot, as the No. 1, or 2. The proper dog is the rough, curled, water ſpaniel, of which the white ſort are commonly the beſt; they ſhould be under the ſtricteſt command; be ready at fetching any thing out of the water, without biteing it; and catching what is only wounded; ſhould be uſed, on occaſion, to creep quiet, and cloſe behind the maſter's heel: of ſuch, one or two will be ſufficient for this ſort of ſhooting. The fowl may either be ſhot ſwimming, or, which is better, taken on the wing; as in the water they are ſtrongly guarded by the cloſe lying of their wings and feathers; therefore, if a perſon is a good marksman, it will be always beſt to ſpring them firſt. The beſt place to throw the ſhot, if opportunity will allow, is under the wing, as that is by much the tendereſt place; and the worſt of all

is

is the breaſt, as the feathers here lie extremely thick and cloſe. This ſport, though very good, where wild-fowl are plenty, is very little practiſed by gentlemen, owing to the ſeveral diſagreeable circumſtances attending it.

The fen-ſhooting is but little followed by gentlemen ſportſmen, any more than wild-fowl ſhooting. The haunts of the fen-birds are ſufficiently known by their title. We uſe, in general, the No. 3 ſhot, which will ſerve as well for the bittern, and curlew, as the plover. One or two ſteady water or land ſpaniels may be uſed; and it will be always beſt to ſpring the birds before firing.

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## *Of various Upland Winter Shooting.*

OUR common field ſhooting is generally beſt in froſty weather, and when the ground has a tolerable cover of ſnow. We have, in moſt parts of England, a variety which affords very tolerable ſport; the moſt common are, the different ſorts of wild pigeons, fieldfares, ſtarlings, redwings, &c. In this diverſion we uſe no dog; and the fewer ſhooters together the better. The ſeveral kinds of pigeons require the No. 3 ſhot, as being ſtrong birds;

and may be either taken on the wing, or as they perch on a tree; but the rock pigeons are beſt, in general, taken on the wing; however, it ſometimes happens that a ſhot at them ſitting is more proper; in this, diſcretion muſt direct. The fieldfare is a very common bird, it ſeems to delight moſt in large cloſe orchards; but in hard weather, in the fields: they frequent the haws buſhes, and afford very pretty diverſion: though they are naturally very wild, yet, when a hard froſt is ſet in, there is no difficulty in getting within forty yards of them, at the time they are keenly engaged on their feeding buſh: here they will ſit forty or fifty ſometimes together. The proper way of managing this kind of ſhooting is, if poſſible, to ſecrete behind a buſh, or in a hedge, within ſhot of one of the buſhes they frequent: when a ſufficient number (as the perſon may judge) are together, to fire at them as they ſit; what are killed ſhould be taken up, and the ſhooter replace himſelf as before: in a quarter of an hour, or leſs, more will probably be on the buſh: and he may often go on ſhooting in the ſame place, all the while they are on their feed, which is from a little after ſun-riſe till eleven or twelve o'clock; and in the afternoon they go on again, about an hour before ſun-ſet; but ſuch ſport as this muſt be expected only where fieldfares are in great plenty. Starlings afford tolerable diverſion in ſhooting; in winter they, for the moſt part, go in flocks from twenty to fifty; they delight chiefly to be in moiſt paſtures, among cattle, and

ſome-

ſometimes ſit ſo cloſe together on the ground, that a perſon may kill twenty-five or thirty at a ſhot; taking theſe on the ground, or wing, may be left at the diſcretion of the ſhooter; but the wing will be beſt preferred: what are ſhot, ſhould have their heads immediately pulled off, which, by their bleeding, prevents a bitterneſs of taſte they would otherwiſe have: uſe for theſe and fieldfares the No. 4 ſhot. In ſhooting larks in flocks, uſe the No. 5 ſhot; and make it a rule always to take them on the wing: here it will be adviſeable to have the gun ſcatter more than common; in order to do this, put in an equal quantity of powder and ſhot, ſuppoſing the uſual charge to be three parts ſhot to two of powder; but if the gun, in common, carries an equal quantity of each, then it will be neceſſary to put in only about three parts of ſhot to four of powder: and in ſhooting any of the ſmaller birds in flocks, this rule of charging ſhould be obſerved.

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## *Neceſſary Obſervations for the young Sportſman.*

THE ſportſman ſhould make it a general rule to turn out with or before the ſun: the morning is the beſt time for all ſorts of ſhooting.

He ſhould be provided with a ſpare flint or two, and a ſtrong pocket knife that will ſerve, on occaſion, the purpoſe of a turn-ſcrew: he ſhould take out the beſt powder that can be got, and that ſized ſhot which ſuits the ſport he purſues. When we come to the place where we turn out, if dogs are uſed, we put them on the hunt by whiſtling or hying on (as the term is): it is neceſſary to obſerve the motions of ſpaniels, for there are but few but what will give ſome intimation when they come on ſcent; uſe them to come in at a ſharp call, and never ſuffer them to run after a bird, except it is wounded: obſerve to let the dogs, whether ſpaniels or pointers, have the wind as much as poſſible (that is, let them hunt againſt the wind). In uſing pointers when they are perceived drawing on a point, and are known to be not quite ſtaunch, call to them to take heed, and if they ſpring without ſtanding, correct them ſlightly with a ſwitch, or ſmall ſtick, or better a pocket dog-whip, ſpeaking angrily to them, and keep them at a diſtance the remaining part of the day, but not ſo much as to make them ſulkey; however, if their after behaviour deſerves encouragement, it may not be improper to take them again into favour. Obſerve after a fire never to blow through the barrel, but charge again immediately while the inſide of the barrel is hot and dry; by this method of immediate charging, a gun ſeldom hangs fire, and carries much ſmarter and better; there is no occaſion to wipe either pan or flint while out (if the flint is good which, by the bye, it always ſhould be) but

on the returning home wipe clean with tow, or linen rags, both out and inſide of the barrel; and alſo the lock from the ſoil of the powder; when it is thus cleaned, hang it up, and if it can be ſo ordered where a conſtant winter fire is kept, hanging it at a moderate diſtance from the fire; the powder flaſk ſhould alſo be kept in the ſame degree of warmth in winter time: if the gun has received any rain or wet, let it be wiped thoroughly dry, and ſtand ſome time near a fire to dry any remaining damp, and have a little oil rubbed over it before hanging up. Laſtly, it may be obſerved, if a gun is brought home loaded, if it is not very foul it may remain four or five days fit for uſe, but never ſhould longer as it will be apt to hang fire, and even if it remains but one night loaded, the touch hole ſhould be cleared with a pin, and freſh primed: but it is a good cuſtom with many never to ſuffer a gun to be hung up charged, but on returning home to draw the ſhot and fire off the powder, by which, they not only prevent ſome degree of hanging fire, but alſo are clear of any accident happening by unwary, or ignorant meddlers, of which we have had many fatal ſtances.

FINIS.

*** *This Pamphlet, being entered in the Hall-Book of the Company of Stationers, whoever pirates it will be prosecuted as the Law directs.*